How one simple change can reduce your microplastic intake by 90%

03/09/2025 // Cassie B. // **110** Views

Tags: Bottled Water, environment, microplastics, Plastic, pollution, toxins

- Microplastics are pervasive in air, food, and water, and they are linked to health risks like cancer, reproductive issues, and digestive problems.

- Switching from bottled to filtered tap water can reduce microplastic intake by 90%, cutting annual exposure from 90,000 to 4,000 particles.

- Bottled water is a major source of microplastics, with particles leaching into water when bottles are squeezed or exposed to heat.

- Microplastics have been found in human organs, including brains, with higher concentrations linked to dementia and inflammation.

- Additional steps to reduce exposure include avoiding plastic food containers, limiting processed foods, and storing food in glass or stainless steel.

Microplastics are everywhere. These tiny plastic particles smaller than a grain of rice are in the air we breathe, the food we eat, and even the water we drink. Recent studies have linked these pervasive particles to serious health risks, including reproductive issues, digestive problems, and even cancer. But here's the good news: a single lifestyle change could reduce your microplastic intake by an astonishing 90%.

According to a new scientific paper published in *Genomic Press*, switching from bottled water to filtered tap water can cut your annual microplastic consumption from 90,000 particles to just 4,000.

The research, led by three physicians, highlights bottled water as one of the most significant sources of microplastic exposure. When plastic bottles are squeezed or exposed to heat, particles break off from the inner surface and contaminate the water. "Given the widespread presence of microplastics in the environment, completely eliminating exposure is unrealistic. A more practical approach is to reduce the most significant sources of microplastic intake," the researchers wrote.

Why bottled water is a microplastic hotspot

Bottled water has become a staple in American households, with 16.2 billion gallons consumed last year alone. However, its convenience comes at a cost. Microplastics from the bottles themselves leach into the water, especially when exposed to heat or physical pressure. Filtered tap water, on the other hand, contains far fewer microplastics, making it a safer and more sustainable choice.

The health risks of microplastics are alarming. These particles have been detected in human placentas, kidneys, lungs, livers, and even brains. Startling research published last month found that the human brain contains approximately a spoon's worth of microplastics, with higher concentrations in individuals with dementia. Microplastics can damage intestinal cells, trigger inflammation, and disrupt gut bacteria, potentially leading to long-term health issues.

Other ways to reduce microplastic exposure

While switching to filtered tap water is the most impactful change, there are other steps you can take to minimize your microplastic intake:

- Avoid heating food in plastic containers. Microwaving food in plastic can release up to 4.22 million microplastic particles per square centimeter in just a few minutes.

- Limit consumption of canned and processed foods. Highly processed foods, like chicken nuggets, contain 30 times more microplastics per gram than minimally processed

alternatives.

- Store food in glass or stainless steel containers. Plastic containers shed microplastics over time, especially when exposed to heat or acidic foods.

The world produces nearly 460 million metric tons of plastic annually, a figure expected to double by 2050. As microplastics continue to infiltrate our environment, reducing exposure is crucial. Although the long-term health effects of microplastics are still being studied, the evidence suggests that minimizing intake can have significant benefits.

“Reducing intake is a logical approach,” the researchers wrote, “but it remains unclear whether this translates into a measurable reduction in microplastic accumulation within human tissues.”

Microplastics are an unavoidable reality of modern life, but small changes can make a big difference. By switching from bottled water to filtered tap water, you can reduce your microplastic intake by 90%—a simple yet powerful step toward protecting your health. Combined with other lifestyle adjustments, such as avoiding plastic food containers and limiting processed foods, you can significantly lower your exposure to these harmful particles. As research continues to uncover the full impact of microplastics, taking proactive steps today could safeguard your health for years to come.

Sources for this article include:

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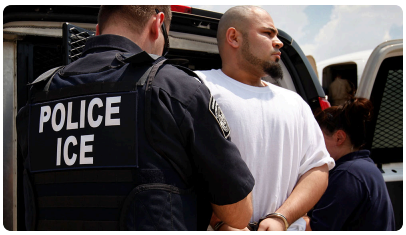

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